UNITED FARM WORKERS

Organizing Committee

CESAR E. CHAVEZ, *Director*
LARRY ITLIONG, *Asst. Director*

Telephones 725-8661
725-0375

NATIONAL OFFICE: Box 130
Delano, California 93215

AFL-CIO

GEORGE MEANY, *President*
WM. F. SCHNITZLER, *Secretary-Treasurer*
WM. L. KIRCHER, *Director of Organization*

9

January 14, 1967

Hank Anderson, Chrm.
Citizens for Farm Labor
P. O. Box 1173
Berkeley, Calif.

Dear Hank:

The enclosed leaflet will demonstrate the significance of the support we have received from the California Self-Help Service Corps project and the parent organization, the California Center for Community Development. The copy of the newspaper article tells of the attack which Perelli-Minetti has made against another branch of the CCCD for involving itself with us.

Now, with the termination date of the Self-Help Service Corps project drawing near, it finds itself struggling to stay alive. If one of the few organizations that is truly involving the poor in seeking solutions to their own problems is to continue, we must give them our support. The success of the struggles of the oppressed minority depends upon organizations such as this one. This project must be allowed to continue. Its termination will just be another door slamming shut on the voices of the people who are crying for change.

We strongly urge you to send telegrams or letters of support and other expressions of concern to your congressman and other persons whose influence could be effective in helping to continue this project.

VIVA LA CAUSA!

Sincerely yours,

Cesar E. Chavez

Cesar E. Chavez, Director
United Farm Workers Organizing
Committee, AFL-CIO

CEC:esw

opeiu-30
afl-cio

December 20, 1966

Mr. Theodore Berry
Community Action Program
Office of Economic Opportunity
Executive Office of the President
Washington, D. C. 20506

Dear Mr. Berry:

We herewith request that our proposal for refinancing the California Self-Help Service Corps project be revised to include language which would lift or substantially revise current restrictions on the activities of trainees related to labor unions. We specifically ask OEO to review this restriction in light of the judgement and experience of our field and research staff that the current prohibition against union activities during project hours is overly restrictive and detrimental to aims of the war on poverty and the maximum involvement of the poor to better their conditions.

It is difficult to convince the poor that a project is actually in their interest if there are severe restrictions on how the project may help them help themselves.

One example from our project plus an overview of the current social, economic climate in California will suffice to illustrate our point that a real war on poverty project cannot prohibit union activities.

One of our trainees in the California Self-Help Service Corps is James Mason working in Bakersfield. After being placed in Bakersfield to work on the problems of juveniles, Mr. Mason gained a reputation for helping people. Other than juveniles came to him. He worked on welfare cases, school issues, etc., etc. Even before coming with our project Mr. Mason was active in CORE and had steered some of the City of Bakersfield garbage collectors toward a union. Some weeks after Mr. Mason became employed by our project, the garbage collectors came to him again for advice. He gave it. Gradually the relationship between the garbage men and the City of Bakersfield deteriorated toward a strike. We were required to remove Mr. Mason.

We could not in good conscience order Mr. Mason to quit helping the garbage men in their fight. We, therefore, removed him from the Self-Help Service Corps payroll and put him on the general CCCD payroll until the strike was over and Mr. Mason could move onto other activities.

To avoid as many of these cases as possible, the Self-Help Service Corps pointedly avoided placing any trainees in the Delano area and has thereby avoided facing the union activity issue directly.

However, when the organization activity spreads to farm workers in areas where Self-Help Service Corps trainees are working it is likely that some of them will become involved in the same way that Mason became involved with the garbage collectors. In the Bakersfield situation the Center was able to support Mr. Mason, through private funds but this is not feasible.

To meet this emergency before it arises we ask that OEO recognize that self-help organization such as that promoted by our project will eventually and inevitably become involved in the central issue of poverty -- wages -- if it is to truly reflect and express the desires and needs of the poor people with whom it works.

For these reasons we ask that the prohibition against union activities by the staff and trainees in the California Self-Help Service Corps be reviewed and substantially revised.

In view of the extremely limited time available please advise us immediatly on this issue.

Sincerely,

Edward P. Dutton
Executive Director

cc: William Downs
Eric Tolmack
Ed Roasch

A valuable OEO program in California is now faced with a tough refunding fight. This program, called the California Self-Help Service Corps under the auspices of the California Center for Community Development (CCCD), has been directly involved in significant battles with poor people and the efforts of our union. For these reasons it is under heavy political fire.

The Service Corps, funded directly from Washington under section 207 of the Economic Opportunity Act, is designed to train 40 rural poor people to be community leaders in their own areas.

During in-residence training sessions the project gives the people a broad background in organizational history and techniques. The trainees are then to work in the field under direct supervision for nearly one year. To complete the full round of training and fieldwork the project must be refunded to next November 28. Current funds expire January 28.

The trainees now out on field assignments throughout the rural communities in the state are involved in a wide spectrum of activities ranging from self help housing and welfare rights to union activities and local poverty commission organization.

In many cases the trainees and their supervisors have been a direct aid to our union's organizing efforts. They assisted our marchers when the Sacramento Peregrinacion went through their towns. They have conducted our boycott activities in their communities. They have organized food and clothing drives for the Delano strikers. Many of them also are forming organized enclaves which will be prepared for the union when our movement spreads out from Delano.

Some trainees are signing people right now directly into our union. Others are moving into other union activity. One of the Self-Help Service Corps trainees in Bakersfield assisted city garbage collectors to organize (A.F.S.M.E.) and in an unprecendented action, pulled off a successful 2½-day strike during which 48 of the 52 men walked off the job and no garbage was collected.

The training program of the Self-Help Service Corps has sparked the flames of hope in many rural California communities. The Self-Help Service Corps' parent organization, the CCCD, has been directly helpful to our union in a number of additional ways. It has purchased property for our union offices and its staff members have worked directly with the Delano strike. Our present chief organizer is a CCCD employee, as is our present director of the Perelli-Minetti boycott.

CCCD's initial political trouble came because of its support for our struggle. Its office displayed a "Viva La Huelga" sticker and the director and field director of the Self-Help Service Corps worked in the Delano strike before the project was funded.

When the funding and staffing of the Self-Help Service Corps was announced, Congressman Sisk of California, under pressure from the growers, protested. Two weeks after the funds were granted they were withdrawn. There followed three months during which the CCCD was pressured to fire the Self-Help Service Corps director and to agree that none of its staff or trainees would support any union activity. CCCD refused, but did agree to move the project headquarters out of Sisk's district.

Now that the Self-Help Service Corps is seeking refunding to complete its project, the opposition has come out in the open again.

Congressman Sisk has vowed to kill the Self-Help Service Corps because trainees on another CCCD project were involved in one of our boycott picket lines in Fresno. In Modesto Congressman McFall has attacked CCCD because Self-Help Service Corps trainees refused to be "quiet a few weeks before election."

If the Self-Help Service Corps is killed by political pressure from McFall and Sisk, it will serve as notice to farm workers and other poor people in the rural parts of California that the government indeed favors to rich over the poor...and that the war on poverty is not really serious.

This conclusion by our people seems especially valid in view of the fact that Sisk and McFall are the leading advocates of irrigation water projects through which the growers receive huge federal subsidies while they oppose the Self-Help Service Corps to help the poor.

Your efforts to help in refunding of the California Self-Help Service Corps would be appreciated.